

Ellery's Magic Bicycle

Maria Monte

Zoe Saunders, Illustrator

Bonny Books

Hardcover \$21.99 (38pp)

978-0-9875130-7-6

Ellery's Magic Bicycle is an uplifting picture book in which a girl forms a magical friendship that lasts throughout the years.

In Maria Monte's heartwarming picture book *Ellery's Magic Bicycle*, a girl with a bike that seems to heal itself learns a valuable lesson about friendship and gratitude.

Ellery finds an old purple bicycle and decides to take it home. Happy to have a new friend, it heals itself of its dents and rust. And as Ellery gets bigger, so does the bicycle.

When Charlie moves in next door, the bicycle helps Ellery to befriend him. When he moves away again, the bicycle comforts Ellery. Many years later, when Ellery is married to Charlie, has a daughter, and no longer has time to ride the bike, she rediscovers it while cleaning out her shed; her fond memories of their time together make her keep it.

That the bike changes to suit Ellery's needs, and that she cares for it by decorating it with daisy chains and singing to it, makes their relationship endearing if imbalanced: the bike does more for Ellery than she does for it. The moral of the story is ambiguous, though its nostalgic, loving emotions are palpable because of Ellery's smile and sweet call for the bike to stay with her.

Ellery's words are powerful and succinct: "Teach me" and "Hold me," she asks. And the book's use of onomatopoeia—the bike *thwumps* to grow bigger, and *whirrs* its wheels—results in a tangible, appealing text. Evocative language, as of "spiders [who] surfed their stringy webs on the bicycle's spokes," contribute to this singular atmosphere.

The illustrations include gorgeous depictions of nature, rich with diverse foliage, bright colors, and cute butterflies and bees. The colors of a splendid sunset stripe across the sky of a beautiful two-page spread that portrays Ellery, Charlie, and the bicycle running through a lush field of wheat and flowers. The humans' faces express a range of emotions, from sorrow to joy to boredom, and the bike's sparkles are a constant reminder of its magic.

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AIMÉE JODOIN (December 16, 2021)

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